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Cyril W. Beaumont

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

WHAT a year this has been for ballet lovers! Indeed, if Festival Year is remembered at all in the annals of the theatre, it will surely be because of the flood of ballet and dance companies and recitals we have seen.

How much of it all was really worthwhile I would not like to guess. We are still too close to it to know what will turn out to be memorable. What shall we recall next summer? — assuming we *have* a summer in 1952.

As this is our last number before the New Year, may I, on behalf of myself and all my colleagues, wish you all a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. For myself, I should like to add especial good wishes to all the overworked and underpaid members of the various *corps de ballet*. They rarely get any praise, and their slightest errors are pounced on by the critics (including myself, I am ashamed to admit). Yet they are the backbone of any ballet company; for ballet is above all a co-operative art and ballerinas, however brilliant, need a worthy setting before their own art can shine out to the world.

Our best wishes go out, too, to our Editor, Miss P. W. Manchester, who seems to be having a thoroughly good time in America. However, we shall be very glad to have her back with us.

And I cannot end without a pat on *Ballet Today's* own back for being the one and only ballet magazine appearing at the modest price of 1/- in these days of fantastic prices for paper, and rising costs everywhere. How do we manage it? Well, partly because we are not out for profits; our first con-

sideration is *you* — and everything goes back into improving our service to you.

While on the subject of *corps de ballet* and their lack of recognition, I want to put in a word for the dancing chorus in musical comedies. I may not be quite ninety yet, but I do remember when the chorus of musicals consisted of ladies and gentlemen no longer in their prime, who were expected to do no more than a few *chassés* to one side and then the other (the sort of thing Ashton has satirised so brilliantly in "Popular Song" in *Facade*). With the advent of *Oklahoma* all this changed: the dancing chorus was expected to carry out the wishes of some of the best American choreographers, and proved that they could dance with all the verve and abandon required of them. The dances in *Kiss Me Kate*, for example, are some of the best things in the show; and I am glad to see that British musicals are following suit.

On the opening night of *Zip Goes a Million* there was a special cheer for the chorus which had worked with great enthusiasm during the evening. I sometimes feel ballet-lovers are a trifle snooty about musical comedy dancing, with no good reason. The dances for *Finian's Rainbow*, to mention only one example, were at least as exciting and as difficult technically as most new ballets, and they were in much closer touch with real human beings, too. *Ballet Today* will continue to keep a friendly eye on dancing in musicals, and recommends ballet purists to do the same. They will have many pleasant surprises.

We, by which I mean you and I, are always grumbling about the shortcoming of our ballet companies. Suppose Santa Claus were to give you unlimited cash with which to start a company, commission and cast a new ballet. Who would you choose for the various jobs? On page 13 of the present issue you will find details of a competition on these lines which should provide you with several hours' pleasant thoughts. I don't think you will find the job as easy as you may have thought at first.

Any would-be competitor or choreographer is welcome to make use of my idea for a Proust ballet. This will portray in some detail the entire twelve volumes of *Remembrance of Things Past*. The heroine of the Second Act will, of course, be Odette, and the whole opus will be entitled *Swann Lake*.
F. J.

The photograph on the cover is of Mary Ellen Moylan of Ballet Theatre in the Black Swan pas de deux. It is by Walter E. Owen.

NEWS FROM NEW YORK

By P. W. MANCHESTER

SADLER'S Wells Theatre Ballet got off to an excellent start in Canada and could hardly have had more warmhearted notices. Mr. S. Hurok's publicity manager, Martin Feinstein, returned from the opening performances full of enthusiasm for the company and repertoire in general and for *Les Rendezvous* in particular. This apparently sneaked up on him and everyone else quite unawares and has been the unexpected hit which all visiting companies anywhere invariably have. (Remember *The Prodigal Son* by New York City Ballet at Covent Garden last year, which was thrown on almost as an afterthought and was the triumph of the season? And, of course, *Facade* here about which we all shook our knowing heads).

One thing that is very noticeable is that the reviews for the repertoire of their own works are very much better than those received by Sadler's Wells Ballet for most of the ballets they took with them outside the classics. Indeed the more I hear from Americans about the two visits of Sadler's Wells, the more I realise how shudderingly close they might have come to complete disaster had it not been for *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*.

The company are having the usual quota of illnesses and accidents, starting off with a 'flu epidemic the moment they arrived. Sheilah O'Reilly sustained an injury early on but the most serious casualty so far is Michael Hogan who slipped on a bead from someone's broken necklace in *The Prospect Before Us* and sprained his ankle very badly. This was in Toronto, so he made his entry into the United States on crutches.

JOSE GRECO'S SUCCESS

When a month's season, playing one programme only, was announced for José Greco and his Company at the Shubert Theatre on Broadway everyone said it couldn't be done, particularly with so little advance publicity; no Spanish dancers had ever had that long a season, the ballet public would not go more than once and theatregoers would not go at all. So what has happened is that the company danced to sold-out houses for the full four weeks and, without missing a performance, have been transferred for another month to the Century Theatre, as the Shubert was booked for a play. This is altogether unprecedented because hitherto no theatrical agent has dared book Spanish dancers for more than a few special performances with a tremendous publicity build-up to put them over.

As in London, the gipsy Teresa Maya was the sensation of the season, and *En El Cortijo* was invariably encored for as many times as the dancers were prepared to repeat it.

MICHAEL KIDD

Michael Kidd returned to New York for a few days after four months in England choreographing the dances for his first film *Where's Charley?* which all the world must by now know is the musical version of *Charley's Aunt* with Ray Bolger the great American hoover-comedian. Kidd seems modestly pleased with the way his dances are likely to appear on the screen although he was only able to see the rushes without colour. Contrary to the usual ideas about the freedom of the camera, he feels that it is actually far more restricting than the stage so far as dance arrangements are concerned because, although it can swoop in all directions, it only takes in so comparatively little at a time, while stage action is always seen as a whole.

While in New York he spent most of his time re-rehearsing and tightening up his dances for *Guys and Dolls* which ties for first place with *The King and I* as being the most difficult show in town to get into. By the time this appears he will already be in Hollywood working on the new June Haver-Dan Dailey musical to be called *The Girl Next Door*.

His contract with Warner Bros. for *Where's Charley?* provided for him to take his wife and two children with him to England—a most unusual clause for a film contract. 'But then', says Kidd, 'how many choreographers have a wife and children?'

BALLET THEATRE

I wish I could be enthusiastic about the recent Ballet Theatre season at the Metropolitan Opera House. The truth is that London's favourite visitors have struck a bad patch. It is not that the company has not good dancers—they are excellent and they work hard and earnestly but there is the same kind of feeling that nothing is quite 'coming off' for them from which Sadler's Wells was suffering when I left London. If it had not been for the Babilées who, of course, only dance in their own ballets and do not belong in the company as it is actually constituted, the season would have been flat indeed. Even the impeccable Youskevitch was a little off form. This only means that he did not dance quite so well as Youskevitch; he was still better than anyone you could mention—as a *premier danseur noble* he lives

in lonely state in a class by himself and I can see no successor on any horizon.

Nijinska's *Schumann Concerto* is the sort of work that gets put on when a company desperately needs a new ballet and no one has any real ideas. It is fantastically difficult to dance as though the choreographer wanted to find out exactly how far a ballerina and a *premier danseur* can be extended without actually dropping dead. Alicia Alonso defeats this object by dancing it all as though it were almost easy. Her technique and her wonderful lightness when she is lifted are wellnigh unbelievable. The *pas de deux* to the slow movement is easily the best part of a rather sorry affair. Youskevitch was handicapped by enormous shoulder ribbons which flapped round his ears as he danced. Very sensibly he took the law into his own hands and cut them off before the second performance. Why they were not removed at the dress rehearsal is one of those questions which we all ask ourselves on the frequent occasions when obvious mistakes are allowed to be seen by the public before being rectified.

The revival of *Bluebeard* with several scenes which we did not see in London in 1946 showed it up as an extremely scrappy work which I am certain must have been far more closely knit when Fokine originally directed it, though it could never have been one of his major ballets. John Kriza in the title role gave one an idea of how hilarious Dolin must have been, and I hope the younger dancer will take this as the compliment it is meant to be. Erik Bruhn from the Royal Danish Ballet is now Prince Sapphire, and in the tarantella which is danced in the rustic scene was the only dancer who looked as if he knew what he was doing. It must have reminded him of the last act of *Napoli*.

My patriotism was all aglow when I saw *Les Patineurs* and realised how much better it is done in England. Of course these dancers have not had the advantage of working for years with Frederick Ashton and the way in which they have retained the choreography almost unchanged is commendable. Unfortunately the Cecil Beaton decor is quite horrid—the costumes are ugly both in colouring and design. What pleased me very much is that the Blue Skater (only he is Emerald Green here) can go on turning his *grande pirouette* while the curtain rises and falls on him again. Audiences here seem to like this ballet extremely.

Ballet Theatre is very short of strong female soloists. They have no dancers to take the place of Nora Kaye and Diana Adams, and after Alicia Alonso and Mary Ellen Moylan there is far too big a gap. They have some charming girls but they are nowhere near that class. On the other hand they



Photograph by Sedge Le Blang

JOHN KRIZA AS BLUEBEARD IN BALLET THEATRE'S RECENT REVIVAL OF THE FOKINE BALLET

have very much better men than New York City Ballet.

It was not until I saw the revival here of *Princess Aurora* with certain alterations made by Nijinska that I really understood why the Sadler's Wells production of *The Sleeping Beauty* which is so faulty in so many respects caused the furore it did. The unity of style, the ensemble and the completeness of the decor, even if one does not care for it, must have rocked the American public. In this country the cost of mounting any production is so exorbitant that scenery has to be cut to a minimum; hardly any ballet has more than a backcloth—wings are almost unknown, and most of Ballet Theatre's productions are masked in both at the top and sides so that one has little impression of a big stage.

The musical side of Ballet Theatre's performances was frequently so appalling that I sometimes wondered why the dancers did not stop and lodge a protest. Alexander Smallens, who usually conducts, seems not to pay the smallest attention to the stage, having his own rooted ideas as to tempi. Unless there is a drastic overhauling in this direction I do not see how Ballet Theatre can possibly give the performances that the dancers have in themselves the ability to give.

New Ballets in Paris

IT fell to the Ballets des Champs Elysées to open the ballet season in Paris, at the Empire Theatre, at the beginning of October. Unfortunately, the initial reaction of the audience was cool: perhaps because we were made to wait for the new works and thus the impression was gained that nothing really original or remarkable was to be expected. The company had two new stars to show us: Leon Danielian, late of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo—a brilliant yet expressive technician—and Paula Hinton, a strong dancer gifted with a fine dramatic temperament.

After a few somewhat dull evenings, the company had a sudden dazzling success with Ruth Page's *Revanche*, a choreographic version of Verdi's *Trovatore*, with music well chosen from the opera. A complicated story of passion, hatred and witchcraft, the choreography nevertheless was as clear as a tale told by the finest of raconteurs. The ballet is in five scenes, and all are superb. Alternating lights and shadows are seen before depths of black, grey, blue; in the scene in the camp of the gypsies a spider's-web of branches is thrown into relief by the indigo of the sky. *Revanche* is successful from every angle, musically, choreographically, decoratively and in interpretation right down to the *corp de ballet*: everything goes with the precision of clockwork. This is no mimed story, but a ballet danced throughout. Sonia Arova (Azucena), Wladimir Skouratoff (*le*

ANTONI CLAVE, THE SPANISH ARTIST WHO DESIGNED THE COSTUMES AND DECOR FOR *REVANCHE*

Photograph by Fred Brommet



RUTH PAGE AND SONIA AROVA (LEFT) WHO BOTH DANCE THE ROLE OF THE GIPSY AZUCENA IN *REVANCHE*

Trouvère), Jacqueline Moreau (*Léonor*) and Gerard Ohn (the brother of *le Trouvère*) were all admirable. The evening was a real triumph for Ruth Page and for Clavé who designed the decors.

Romanza Romana, by Frank Staff, with music composed by Pierre Petit and decor by Guillaume Gillet, is a gay, sophisticated affair full of real dancing. Various people pass in a square in Rome: a preacher, a nun, ragged boys, a "sandwich-man", and so on. A guide is escorting some tourists: a bearded gentleman and his young niece, who falls in love with a young workman, danced by Skouratoff, whose nimble lightness of foot won him new laurels in this role. The young girl was danced alternately by Danielle Darmance and Violette Verdy. The music is unpretentious and charming, and the choreography is conceived in the same spirit.

La Damnée, a ballet by Walter Gore with music by Samuel Barber and decor by Yves Bonnat, is an expressionistic ballet. The subject is as follows: a young woman (Paula Hinton) is pursued by peasants who accuse her of witchcraft. A priest tries to protect her, but, hearing the cries of the villagers approaching, she believes that he is trying to trap her in order to hand her over to her enemies. Desperate, she strikes the priest and kills him. The mob seizes her and she is burned to death.

This is a stark and cruel work, without concessions to popular taste, and fitting well with the decors which are sombre and hard. We feel that the choreographer has borne in mind the theories of German expressionism, without attempting to impose any philosophical or metaphysical observations.

Paula Hinton makes a striking and savage creature of the leading character; the damned pursued by demons, dragged to the scaffold as a beast to the slaughterhouse. *La Damnée* cannot appeal to every taste, but conveys distinction upon the company which presents it.

FERDINAND REYNA.

ON TOUR WITH THE THEATRE BALLET

A LETTER SENT BY MICHAEL HOGAN FROM DETROIT

Dear Janet,

It was with much excitement that we left London on September 25th, arriving in Liverpool after an uneventful train ride. We got through Customs without a hitch, soon found our cabins on board the *Empress of France* and before we knew where we were we found ourselves out at sea. After a wonderful dinner we went on deck to look at the coast of Northern Ireland, and the Northern Lights flashing across the sky. Next morning we were wakened by the pounding motion of the ship, and found many members of the company absent at breakfast—in fact most of them disappeared for the next two days, except for some of the boys, for example Maurice Metliss and Don Britton, who thrived on the motion. The first couple of days over, everyone began to enjoy the voyage in spite of some very rough weather. One night we had a dance which was great fun as the sea was so stormy we could hardly stand; on another occasion when Romaine Austin and Arnot Mader were celebrating their birthdays the chef made them a special birthday cake for an informal party.

On Monday, October 1st, we woke to find ourselves in the St. Lawrence River, a very welcome sight to see solid ground on either side of the ship. As we approached the dock at Quebec we could see Svetlana Beriosova and Mr. Hurok waiting to meet us. We all felt very glad to have arrived at last and to board our buses for the Chateau Frontenac, a magnificent hotel. The next morning rehearsals started at the Palais Montreal where we were to perform on Friday and Saturday.

On the Wednesday afternoon we went on a bus tour of the city, arranged for us by Mr. Hurok. We saw the Montmorency Falls and the Heights of Abraham, and also the French quarter of Quebec.

Our opening performance on Friday, October 5th, was *Coppelia*. In spite of our nerves I feel we all danced well. Fifield was acclaimed by the press and so—though not without reservations—was Blair.

At two o'clock on the Sunday morning we were installed in our sleepers, running around showing each other what we had bought in Quebec, while the train headed for Ottawa via Montreal. Most of us were looking forward to the night trip and were delighted to find the Pullman cars looking just as they do on the films, complete with coloured porters. Clambering into an upper berth without a ladder is quite a feat: we all tried it—once.

Arriving in Ottawa on the Sunday afternoon we prepared for a cocktail party given by the Governor General, Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, and Lady Clutterbuck, to whom we were all introduced under the watchful eye of Ninette de Valois, of whom we had seen little on the trip save for her daily visits on board to make sure that everyone was happy and comfortable. On the Monday we gave two shows in Ottawa, followed by a buffet supper given by the Governor General before we left for Montreal early on the Tuesday morning. Here we gave six shows in four days at the St. Denis Theatre, and here we received our first really good notices. We all liked Montreal, although by this time the good food was making its effect and three-quarters of the company had tummy trouble here.

Arriving in Toronto during the following weekend we were greeted by Celia Franca and her husband, and several members of the Toronto Ballet Company. Mr. and Mrs. Gillies were there to meet their son Don, a member of the company. I stayed with them and had a wonderful week. On the Sunday the company chartered a bus and off we went to Niagara Falls. The only disadvantages of the week were that Joan Cadzow developed a suspected torn cartilage in her knee and was unable to dance, while I slipped on the stage on the Friday and twisted my ankle rather badly: in fact I had to use crutches for a day or two! Toronto audiences and press were most enthusiastic. Celia gave classes in the huge St. Lawrence Hall to us and to her own company simultaneously.

We entered the States on the Sunday and played for two days in Buffalo. An interesting point about this city is that there are more Polish newspapers sold here than in Warsaw. The ballet was a great success, and after our performances we moved on to Rochester, where friends entertained us and drove several of us out to their log cabin among the hills and lakes in the nearby countryside; it was a beautiful day and the autumn colouring of the trees was really something to marvel at. From Rochester we travelled to Cleveland, Ohio, by night train, where we gave a successful show in the evening and then boarded our train again, this time en route for Detroit, where we stayed three days. Over half the population here is coloured; and on our arrival those of us who were awake marvelled at the thirty-storey buildings we saw from the train. After a couple of hours' sleep we prepared for our matinee, to find a half-empty house, owing, we were told, to the fact that the great local football match coincided with our performance and naturally enough took precedence. However, in the evening the huge Masonic Auditorium was full and enthusiastic. Yesterday evening (Sunday, October 27th), was Elaine's twenty-first birthday party, and we celebrated with

Coca-Cola and hot dogs on the nineteenth floor of our hotel. Mr. Hurok gave her two of the biggest boxes of chocolates I have ever seen, and the company gave her a big tartan leather grip and some perfume, as well as many individual presents. At the end of the performance that evening as Elaine was taking her solo call at the end of *Pineapple Poll*, the orchestra struck up "Happy Birthday to You" amid cheers from the audience and the Company in the wings.

Elaine has been acclaimed everywhere in Canada and the States as a future great dancer and Svetlana also; Blair is greatly liked, and so is Britton, who has been giving some very fine and much improved performances of Franz in *Coppelia*. Don has a magnificent pair of cowboy boots, which he is never seen without; he even boasts of sleeping in them. Most of the Company have bought check shirts and jeans and the girls nylon stockings and clothing; the company is in good shape and dancing well. I start classes in a week and reappear to night for the first time since Toronto as a huntsman in *Lac*.

More later,

Sincerely,

MICHAEL.

A VISIT TO LONDON

By GERDA KARSTENS,

LEADING CHARACTER DANCER OF THE ROYAL DANISH BALLET

I ARRIVED in London in a good mood. The sun shone through after some showers over the Thames, and my good friends met me at Kensington Air Station. It was the first time I had visited London, and I came to study English ballet: but ballet was not the first thing to strike me. First of all I had to see the city of London, and therefore after the first meeting I told my friends that I wanted to look round on my own, and I was left alone in the middle of Piccadilly Circus.

So there I was, and what can you do when you are alone in the middle of a new city? To me there was no question: I wanted to begin by having a cup of English tea—and it was better tea than I had ever tasted before. After that I did the thing I always do when visiting a strange town for the first time—I took a walk. I walked for a long while here and there about the city, and found nothing to impress me so much as the queues everywhere: at the bus stops and cinemas and theatres. I finished my journey on the underground!

Next day I was finished with being a tourist, and had to start working. I had twelve days in London

before me, and if I were to see and do everything I wanted, I had to hurry. At the beginning I thought I would see everything in the time, but soon I realised that this would be impossible, and I must choose. It was very difficult, but first of all I had to see so much as possible at Covent Garden. I quickly learnt that there was a great interest in ballet in England: without help from London friends it would have been impossible to get into the theatre, but I was lucky and with their help I was able to get tickets for almost every evening except for Sundays, when of course even the tourist had to stay at home for a rest.

COVENT GARDEN

I have seldom seen so beautiful a theatre: so big and modern, and yet at the same time so attractive. I immediately felt at home and very happy to be there. My expectations were high, but not too high. On the first evening I saw *Checkmate*, a ballet by Dame Ninette de Valois. The idea of the ballet is very original, and I found it very interesting and well done. Next came *Daphnis and Chloe*, which I found most exciting, and I would like to give a special

word of appreciation to Frederick Ashton: it would be a good thing were the Danish Ballet to be influenced by his work.

To sum up my whole reaction would fill several books, but there are some special things which I remember, which have stuck in my memory: *The Rake's Progress*, *Ballabile*, *Ballet Imperial*, *Job*, *Facade*—I have only mentioned a few of the works which I particularly enjoyed. *Giselle* is my own favourite pet child and I liked Violetta Elvin in this role, dancing with Alexis Rassiné. Among the others Nadia Nerina, Michael Somes, Alexander Grant, John Hart and Beryl Grey were outstanding. I was disappointed not to see Shearer, and that Fonteyn was not dancing either, but after all I had seen Fonteyn dance twice in Copenhagen already, and had met her personally and found her a very charming and warm friend. I place Fonteyn's human qualities quite as high as her artistic gifts.

SADLER'S WELLS

There is also a young company: what a dream for

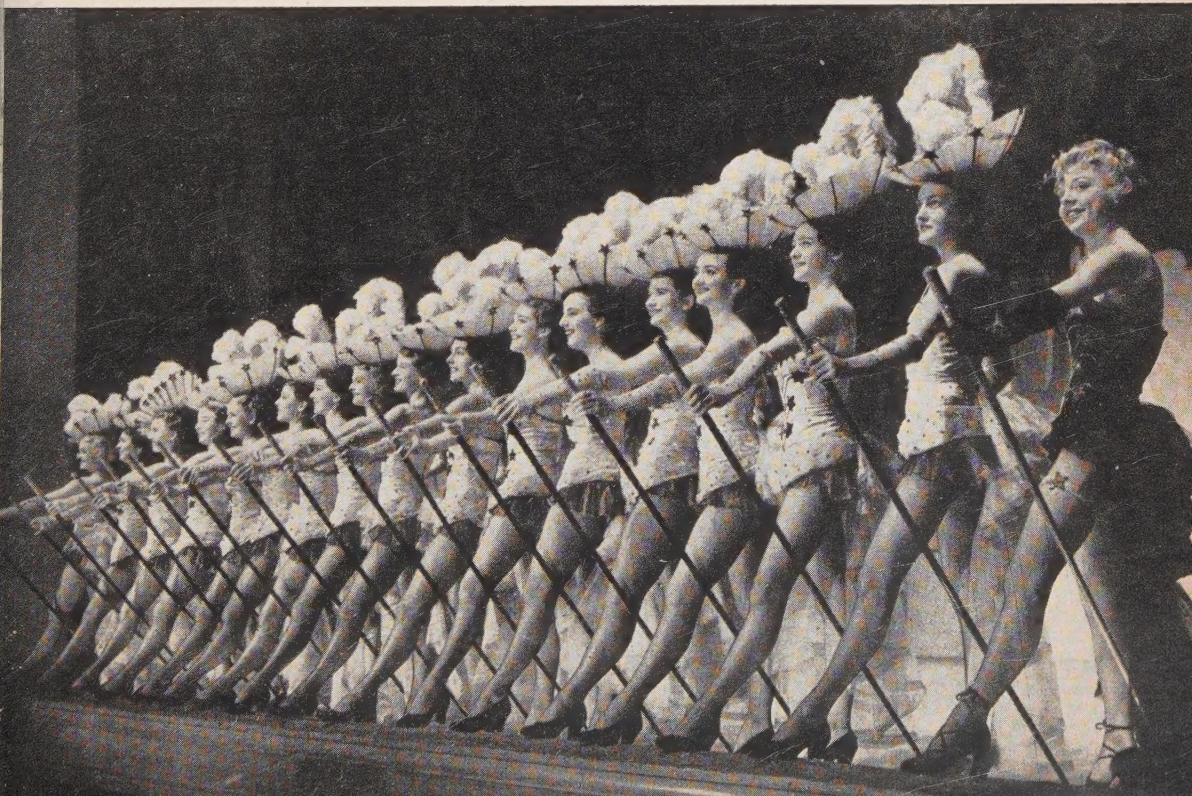
the future! How wonderful it would be if our young dancers could have their own theatre to show what they could do in the same way that the young boys and girls can here in England. I enjoyed very much *Le Lac des Cygnes*, Act 2, with Svetlana Beriosova, and *Coppelia* with Elaine Fifield, David Poole and David Blair: all these young dancers performed their roles with imagination and taste. *Pineapple Poll* was a little jewel; I found Poll quite irresistible, I just had to love her gay and amusing ways.

All this I had seen during my twelve days: and I was spellbound by London and most of all by the ballet. I would like to come back and see more, and most of all I want to come with my friends from the Royal Danish Ballet for a season in London. I know it would be a great experience for us all, for the public appreciates ballet very much: and I hope it may be possible soon.

NOTE.—*The Editors would like to express their grateful thanks to Miss Marianne Axelsson for her help with the translation of this article.*

BARBARA PERRY AND THE GARTER GIRLS IN ONE OF THEIR BIG NUMBERS IN EMILE LITTLER'S NEW MUSICAL AT THE PALACE THEATRE, ZIP GOES A MILLION. THESE DANCERS RECEIVED A SPECIAL CHEER ON THE OPENING NIGHT OF THE SHOW FOR THEIR INFECTIOUS VITALITY AND ENTHUSIASM

Photograph by Houston Rogers



DARK RHYTHMS

By SIGURD LEEDER

Sigurd Leeder is undoubtedly the foremost authority on modern dance in London today. A student of Laban's in pre-war Germany, he collaborated with Jooss from the early days of the Ballets Jooss in Essen. Shortly after the end of the war Leeder retired from the stage and founded his own school in London.

PEARL PRIMUS and her company presented London with a welcome change from the more or less familiar programmes of Spanish and Indian dancing.

It was inspiring to see the intense rhythmical jerks of these dancers, the impulsive thrusting forward of shoulders with arms held taut, the swaying of hips, the whirling of heads and the powerful jumping and stamping, all of which seem to form the vocabulary of African dancing.

We believe that the material offered is authentic and are under the impression that little has been added by Miss Primus as choreographer. Her inventiveness does not offer any interesting patterns in the arrangements for the group and seems to come to the fore only in her solo dances in the second part of the programme.

The company radiated a rewarding sense of sincerity and danced with great technical skill. Each dancer although entering fully into the form of the

PEARL PRIMUS IN HER DELIGHTFUL MODERN DANCE, *STUDY IN NOTHING*
Photograph by Paul Wilson



movements retained his own personality and added with slight touches of idiosyncrasy to the liveliness of the performance.

The costumes were well chosen and it was pleasing to see that some trouble had been taken with the lighting which, except for a few instances of "technicolor" lushness was excellent. The recital on the whole was rather restrained with its stress on stylisation. After the performances of Katherine Dunham and Berto Pasuka, we were prepared to expect far greater abandon and ecstasy in interpretation.

Agu (Dance of Strength) danced by Joseph Comodore, served excellently as an introduction to the technique. In the *War Dance* and in *Gonna Tell God All My Troubles* the group of male dancers scored a well deserved success. The strongest item of Miss Primus' solo dances were *Hard Times Blues* (a protest against Jim Crow) in which her unusual gift for jumping was used to heighten the dramatic effect, and *Strange Fruit* (a man has been lynched) in which she spoke lines of the poem alternated with dance sequences of parallel mood. The effect was impressive and called for admiration of the perfect control of breathing which enabled Miss Primus to speak the lines with technical ease after vigorous movement. Charming was the playfulness and fine sense of movement humour of the *Study in Nothing*.

An important part of the programme was the skillful handling of the drums which gave a most exciting rhythmical accompaniment to the dances, and when Moses Miann in *Drum Talk* gave a solo performance he roused the house to enthusiastic applause. The combination of piano and drum as in *The Initiation* was not convincing. Somehow the piano seemed to belong to another world and failed to blend with the drums.

STOP PRESS

The New York City Ballet will appear at Covent Garden for six weeks from July 7th, 1952. After that it is possible that they will appear at the Edinburgh Festival.

COMPAGNIE MADELEINE RENAUD — JEAN LOUIS BARRAULT AT THE ST. JAMES'S

By ALAN STOREY

AN exception must be made to the general rule of excluding reference to the activities of the legitimate theatre in these pages. For during the brief three weeks of their season this admirable company provided not only the exhilaration of a genuine theatrical occasion, but also that provocation to our native actors and dancers which is so essential if the mental stagnation that follows complacency and creative inertia is to be avoided. The outstanding lesson offered to our native players was not in diction or even production. It was essentially in the art of moving significantly yet always exquisitely. The French Theatre in general is a theatre of movement. It is enormously assisted, of course, by the Gallic temperament which uses gesticulation freely and without any self-consciousness. It is refined and disciplined by an unbroken mime tradition which is as strong today in the Parisian boulevard theatres as ever. The British theatre does not share these assets, it is true, but on the other hand it is not yet too inhibited to learn the principles of mimetic acting and put them into practice.

It is a pity that Barrault did not choose to present his production of Hamlet and thus reveal his full stature as a tragedian. As it was the comedian stood very much to the fore; and so brilliantly and absolutely that it was almost impossible to imagine him as anything else. His body was so controlled, so ineffably light that the words themselves became spectral nuances of tone, an additional *impasto* on the features of the face. An unseen hand appeared to hover over him, to control him; to move him swiftly through space and set him down with indifferent regard to the laws of physical matter. He re-created wonderfully the early and as yet unromantic Pierrot. A Pierrot not yet aware of mortality and the ravages of unrequited love. Strangely enough he was least successful as the *Pierrot Lunaire* in Prevert's version of *Baptiste*. But then it is also true that this mime-play has slowly deteriorated since it left the screen, and was first reproduced on the stage. Possibly the reason is that Barrault alone cannot disguise the basic imaginative poverty of the play; especially when supported only by players who, admirable though they may be as actors and mimetic-actors,

have no true understanding or experience of the peculiar values of 'pure' mime.

I have been in love with Madeleine Renaud since the first time I saw her. She is ageless, and I suspect timeless; perhaps, as a consequence, her ability in artificial comedy is unexcelled. She is all porcelain and silver; a *jeu d'esprit* conceived and beautifully wrought by a Cellini. No red corpuscles surely journey through the transparency of her veins. And the cadences of her voice are those of a carillon rather than the products of mortal tissue. She does not seem to belong to organic life at all. And in those pieces to which she most exquisitely belongs—*Les Fausses Confidences*—for instance—life (the life, at least, of change and replacement) is deliberately excluded, as from a vacuum. The little patch of stage becomes rather a symbol of a moment suspended in time; a moment remembered, prised from the rough setting of actuality. *Les Fausses Confidences* is held in the golden light of an eternal summer afternoon. The air is softened by warmth and the absence of resilience. The atmosphere is indeed a major character in the play, which governs imperceptibly the thoughts and actions and ultimately the destinies of everyone except Araminte, Dubois and, to some extent, Doraminte. Renaud, Barrault and Desailly played these parts with the intensity of birds building a nest. Their acting was as balanced and as intricate as a fugal pattern. Gesture complemented gesture, or else seized it and elaborated upon it. A feeling in me grew that arms, legs and torsos somehow bore their own bewitched existences, freed absolutely from the consciousness of their owners. Desailly's movements were especially beautiful. His gestures occasionally froze, as it were, in attitudes of exquisite grace long after the emotional impetus had vanished, until they too slowly faded away. Desailly is a splendid actor altogether and his versatility is astonishing. I must also mention André Brunot whose corncrake voice and undulating speed of delivery adds zest to every part he plays.

For the rest—a reluctant silence. I await their return with impatience and that is tribute enough. Their performances here have at least prompted me to set down some reflections on mime, especially on its relationship to acting and dancing, which will appear in due course.



ROLF ALEXANDER, NOELLE DE MOSA AND HANS ZULLIG (RIGHT) IN DITHYRAMBUS, A RECREATION OF AN EARLIER BALLET BY KURT JOOSS

Photograph by Robert d'Hooghe

DITHYRAMBICS

By J. STUART BARKER

PRIOR to setting out on a tour of Western Germany and the Benelux countries, the Ballets Jooss have now added two further works to their repertoire—a revival of Hans Züllig's *Le Bosquet* (Rameau/Zinkeisen) first produced in Cambridge in 1945, and *Dithyrambus* (Händell/Bouchène) which Kurt Jooss created in Santiago in 1948 with the title *Juventud*.

Production of the two further projected Jooss works, *Nachtzug* (Tansman/Pudlich) and *Weg im Nebel* (Montijn/Pudlich) has been delayed — probably until Spring next year—by a lawsuit concerning *The Green Table*.

In her latest colour film *Sensation in San Remo* Marika Röck, the revue star, performs a Charleston on nothing less than "the green table", surrounded by the "gentlemen in black", complete with their

well-known masks. Jooss naturally demanded the removal of this scene, but had to take the matter to court to achieve his object. The local Essen judge consequently had the singular duty of watching the Jooss ballet and the scene from the film before reaching a verdict in Jooss' favour. Marika Röck intends to take the case to a higher court, maintaining that the whole affair was pure coincidence, that she had never seen the ballet, and had never heard of Jooss. (The influence of at least two ex-Jooss dancers who appear in the film she seems prepared to ignore.) As a tailpiece, a certain Hannah Spohr (whom God preserve), of Berchtesgaden, has now accused Jooss of plagiarism for having stolen the idea for his ballet from a scenario which she wrote in 1927! (Considering the fact that the Jooss work has been world-famous ever since it was

warded first prize at the *Concours Internationale de Chorégraphie* in Paris in 1932, her claim would seem a trifle belated, to say the least.)

Le Bosquet once more brings us Noelle de Mosa and Hans Züllig as the girl in green and her memory of a lost love. This ballet is now given added interest by comparison with Züllig's second work *Fantaisie*, which shows a clear development in the pastoral style in which he excels. Noelle de Mosa is one of the most expressive of dancers, employing every fibre of her body not only in this work, but in everything in which she appears, especially in *Dithyrambus*, where she is again partnered by Züllig.

This work is performed against plain curtains (at present black, but which might advantageously be changed for light-coloured ones), in lovely Greek-style costumes designed by Dimitri Bouchène. A group of young men in moss-green tunics, led by a youth in wine-red (Rolf Alexander) execute a joyous dance, full of strength and vigour. They are joined by a band of maidens wearing flowing draperies in dark and light tones of lemon, azure, indigo and wine-red, led by a girl in white (Noelle de Mosa). The youth dances with the girl and is joined by one of his friends in green (Hans Züllig) to whom the girl is instantly attracted. Left alone, they perform two subsequent dances expressing the awakening and then the flowering of love—an unusual juxtaposition

of two beautiful *pas de deux*, which is most effective. The first youth returns to find he is rejected and while the rest rejoice, one of the girls in wine-red (Beatrijs Vitranga) attempts in a further *pas de deux* to console him. She is on the point of succeeding when the girl in white drifts by. Realising the influence of the latter is even now greater than her own, she leaves him, first to brood and then to conquer his despair in the joyous dance with his companions which marks a new beginning.

The whole work is full of the exuberance and vitality of youth whether in joy or sorrow, love or conflict, and Jooss is well served by his new company, which has now become much more homogeneous. Beatrijs Vitranga is outstanding in all she does, not only for her striking facial beauty, but also for her flowing movements, dramatic yet lyrical. Lithe and sinuous Alfonso Unanue, discovered by Jooss in Chile, is also worthy of note. He dances Sigurd Leeder's old part in *Le Bosquet* and has now taken over the role of the Profiteer in *The Green Table*. In the latter the new exponents of the Partisan Woman and the Mother (Wiga Schade and Franziska Tona) are giving telling performances, as are also Georg Frosher and Walter Kuhn, as the old and the young soldiers respectively. Recruits from the Folkwangschule continue to be absorbed and Essen may well be proud to have sponsored this new manifestation of the Ballets Jooss.

Christmas Competition

Santa Claus gives you an unlimited supply of cash, on the understanding that it is all used to form a ballet company.

Give an outline, in not more than 200 words, of a new ballet with which to open your season. Who would you choose as your choreographer? Who would you cast in the main parts? (As money is no object, you can choose your dancers from anywhere in the world). Who would write the music, and who would design the sets and costumes?

The best entry in the opinion of the Editors, wins a year's free subscription to "BALLET TODAY". This entry, and others of interest, will be published in the magazine. Please send in your entries not later than December 31st, 1951, to: "Ballet Today", 19 St. Giles' High Street, London, W.C.2. Mark your envelope "Competition".

HOMMAGE A DIAGHILEV

On November 11th, Radio Italiano broadcast a programme of recorded tributes to the memory of Serge Diaghilev from eminent artists who had been closely associated with him during his life. These included Tamara Karsavina, Lydia Lopokova (Lady Keynes), Alexandre Benois, Igor Stravinsky, Leonide Massine, Serge Lifar and Grazioso Cecchetti, son of the great Enrico.

Each artist was introduced with background music specially associated with his or her name—for Karsavina the music of *Le Spectre de la Rose*, for Lopokova *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur*. Benois opened the programme with a short biographical study of Diaghilev, and Karsavina followed with a charming account of her first meeting with him at her flat in Paris. Lopokova's talk traced Diaghilev's achievements both in Russia and Europe and added many personal memories of his character.

The other contributions were equally interesting and it was fitting that the programme should have come from Radio Italiano, for Italy was a country dear to Diaghilev. We hope, however, that it can one day be repeated on our own Third Programme.

BALLET Russe IN CHICAGO

STAR-STUDED SEASON MARKS END OF AN ERA

By ANN BARZEL

WHEN Chicago Opera House manager Herb Carlin insisted on adding guest stars Leonide Massine and Mia Slavenska to the regular roster of Serge Denham's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for the Chicago engagement he may have had the box-office in mind, but he also succeeded in recapturing a lost era of ballet. With Massine, Danilova, Slavenska and Franklin dancing in *Beau Danube*, *Gaieté Parisienne*, *Coppelia*, *Capriccio Espagnol*, *Nutcracker* — something of the excitement of the early days of the "Massine Company" came through.

It was altogether fitting to bring about the reunion at this time, for this season definitely marks the end of an era for this troupe.

Danilova is now a "free-lance ballerina" who will appear with the Ballet Russe only in major engagements. She plans to be with Markova and Dolin's Festival Ballet in Europe early next spring after a three month teaching engagement in Dallas, Texas.

Franklin has announced that after this season he will join with Slavenska in her Ballet Variante, which with an enlarged cast and repertoire will tour England starting next September.

This does not mean the demise of the Denham Company. The second line soloists of this group and its *corps de ballet* are especially strong. In a few weeks Yvette Chauviré joins as ballerina, and Leon Danielian returns from his leave of absence with Les Ballets des Champs Elysées. It depends only on wise direction and good taste in making new ballets whether the company can enter on a period of fresh creativity.

For the Chicago season Massine restaged *Capriccio Espagnol* and danced the lead with vivid Nina Novak. The company put forth such spirited effort that what had once been a minor item in the repertoire became the success of the engagement. Massine's Peruvian in *Gaieté*, embellished by many details and with every moment on stage worked out in meaningful detail, was a joy. With Danilova as Glove-Seller and Franklin as Baron and the choreographer on hand to clean up many of the messy corners, the work regained its verve.

Slavenska and Danilova alternated in *Swan Lake*, *Nutcracker*, *Black Swan pas de deux*, *Don Quixote pas de deux*. The amazing Danilova never danced as

well. Her supported pirouettes have never been so secure or so numerous.

Slavenska has come a long way since her first seasons, when she was merely a great beauty and the strongest ballerina in the company. Her technique now is prodigious and she also brings an intellectual quality to each role and an individual style. She does all the tricks in the *Don Quixote pas de deux* with technical brilliance, then goes into a finishing pose after each phrase that clearly states the 1951 dancer's tolerant amusement toward the whimsies of 1890.

Franklin's unflagging vitality and friendly stage presence are as attractive as ever. For the first time in years he resumed his role of the Dandy in *Beau Danube*. He also danced the role of another dandy, "El Bonito", in Antonia Cobos' *Madronos*.

Ranking soloist Nina Novak dances magnificently and Gertrude Tyven has a flawless perfection in classical roles and a new-found sense of humour for *Graduation Ball* and Tatiana Chamie's *Birthday*.

Oleg Tupine, one of America's top classicists, Roman Jasinsky, Job Sanders and young Alan Howard head a strong male contingent, recently strengthened further by the addition of the Argentine dancer, Victor Moreno, a virile dancer with a high elastic jump. Lupe Serrano from Mexico is another welcome newcomer; she has a high extension and the kind of spectacular pirouettes for the competition in *Graduation Ball* and the Can-Can in *Gaieté*.

During the Chicago engagement of the Ballet Russe Mia Slavenska consulted a local specialist about severe pains in one leg which she has suffered spasmodically over the past three years. The specialist diagnosed a tumor in the tendon sheath, a rare complaint which is most commonly encountered in the overworked thumbs of seamstresses! Upon inquiry, Slavenska admitted that she had indeed subjected one leg to excessive exertion over the past three seasons as she had been dancing the *Black Swan pas de deux* with her own company every night of its tour, always turning the 32 *fouettés* on the same leg. At the end of the Chicago season an operation was successfully performed and the ballerina now hopes her troubles are over.



MICHAEL CHARNLEY (THE CHOREOGRAPHER) AND JUNE LEIGHTON
IN *NO LIPS OF COMFORT*
Photograph by Paul Wilson

Ballet Workshop

By FRANK JACKSON.

THE season's first programme consisted of a revival of Celia Franca's *Colloque Sentimental*, and three new ballets of which Michael Charnley's *No Lips of Comfort* was not only undoubtedly the best, but also one of the most original and interesting works we have yet seen here.

It cut free from the stylistic shackles of "Classical" ballet (as this is misunderstood today) to present, in a medium more approaching what is labelled "modern dance", a human problem (searching for, finding and losing a partner) which is none the less poignant, when observed as freshly as this, for being only too general.

The choreographer was asking for trouble simply by using the spoken word allied to music. He made things even more difficult for himself by choosing elements as apparently disparate as Granados' *Lover and the Nightingale* (with its strong Spanish flavour) and a poem by Rupert Brooke, generally considered

the most English and restrained of writers. But the result justified itself.

The ballet was danced by Michael Charnley himself, with June Leighton, and the poem was spoken by Brian Cobby.

This work suggested a way out of Ballet Workshop's difficulties in finding suitable dancers; ballets designed for two or three performers (in any case more suited to the tiny Mercury stage) would ease that problem at the same time as it created problems for the choreographer and forced him to bear in mind the special conditions under which his work would be seen. It is noteworthy that another striking Ballet Workshop production, *Scherzi della Sorte*, was also on a small scale, numerically speaking, yet does not suffer when shown on a full-size stage.

On second viewing Celia Franca's ballet was seen to have the merit of fitting the neurotic sadness of the music; but here is a ballet which suffers badly because of the size of the stage. At such close quarters, too, the hideousness of the costumes is most troublesome.

La Famille d'Arlequin (Choreography Robert Stevenson; music Khachaturian) was a *suite de danses* with a circus background. The choreographer showed signs of being able to create effective dances for his male dancers (an ability only too rare in our ballet), but the ballet as a whole suffered from confused intentions and was not very well performed.

The last work in the programme, John Hall's *Designed for Dancing*, to music by Meyerbeer, was an accomplished piece with many pleasantly amusing, if highly reminiscent, passages. It was far too long for the point that it made and would create twice the impression if its length were halved.

Bouquet of the Month



This month's bouquet should consist of tropical blossoms because it goes to Charles Queenan, a member of Pearl Primus' company, for his perfect timing and comic support in *Mischievous Interlude*.

Danzas Latino-America



JOAQUIN PEREZ FERNANDEZ AND CARMEN PEREZ FERNANDEZ IN ONE OF THEIR LATIN AMERICAN DANCES

Christmas Ballet at the Festival Hall

The Original Ballet Russe will be appearing in central London for the first time since its re-formation when it gives a short Christmas season at the Royal Festival Hall. The company will give performances twice daily from Boxing Day until January 5th, excluding Monday, December 31st. *Les Presages* will be included in the repertoire and several prominent guest artists are promised for the season.

TO those who, like myself, went along to the Adelphi Theatre for the season of Latin American dances, under the direction of Joaquin Perez Fernandez, with eager anticipation that we were going to see something new and exciting, the opening performance on Wednesday, October 17th, must have proved something of a disappointment. The exciting music and interesting decor called for something outstanding in the way of dancing: instead, the choreography presented an aspect reminiscent only of watered-down Katherine Dunham.

It is difficult, being almost without terms of reference in this country, to judge the authenticity of the spectacle presented to us by Perez Fernandez: on the one hand, some steps in the dances from Argentina have appeared in modified form in English ballroom dancing of the samba type, while on the other Perez Fernandez' own rendering of, for example, zapateo is inaccurate and badly placed, thus calling up doubts as to the likelihood that the rest of the programme is authentic. The various touches of pure ballet, too, as for example in the *arabesques* and fish dives of the female dancers in one concerted number, give an oddly hybrid character to the spectacle.

Taken all in all, this is a rather naive entertainment with touches of brilliance; and it is doubtful whether it can ever rise to anything more while Joaquin Perez Fernandez continues to attempt to combine the offices of director, choreographer and leading dancer. His personality is unsympathetic, and several dancers in his company appear—in such dances for example as the zapateo mentioned above—to excel him. And the greatest genius alive cannot succeed when trying to do everything at once.

ANDRÉ CORDOVA.

Sadler's Wells Ballet to Tour Australia?

Although no official announcement has been made it is rumoured that the Sadler's Wells Ballet will make a tour of Australia in 1952.

As the company is already booked to appear in Portugal next spring, it would appear that London will see little of its national ballet in 1952.

Ballet Theatre

Another rumour which has reached our ears from New York in this instance, is that Lucia Chase has extended an invitation to Boris Kochno to take up the position of artistic director of Ballet Theatre.

GRAND BALLET DU MARQUIS DE CUEVAS

— THE REST OF THE SEASON

By MARY CLARKE

I THINK I enjoyed the brief season by the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas at the Cambridge Theatre in October primarily on account of the conviction with which everyone performed. The resulting performances might not have been free from blemish but at least the dancers seemed to believe in what they were doing while they were on the stage. John Taras has certainly welded the company into a strong unit and with some improvements in artistic direction and choreography this troupe of dancers might accomplish much. At the moment the company is apparently operating on a fairly tight budget and evidence of economies in decor were all too apparent; far too large a proportion of the ballets given had only black drapes for setting or else those strips of changing fabric and cardboard chandeliers that seem to serve for ballroom settings in many companies these days. Sometimes one can get away with this kind of thing, but of course it throws very heavy emphasis on the choreography itself and reveals weaknesses with unkind clarity.

The new Taras ballet, *Bal des Jeunes Filles*, suffered badly in this respect. The choreography had some attractive patches (often recalling a much earlier ballet by Taras, *Graziana*) but was nothing like good enough for the music while both "set" and costumes by Jean Robier were very utilitarian. To a certain extent *Concerto Barocco* was another victim of too severe simplicity. The Berman designs which the New York City Ballet used for this work last year hinted at possibilities but were not entirely satisfactory in practice; it is one of my ambitions to see *Concerto Barocco* performed in settings and costumes of a magnificence equal to that of both music and choreography.

The two ballets by George Skibine were new to London and to me. *Tragedy of Verona* uses a Tchaikovsky overture and a Shakespeare play in much the same proportion as Helpmann's *Hamlet*. There is the same tight condensation, swirling rush of incident, and brief opportunities for sketching in character. The setting and costumes by André Delfau are unpretentious but weak in colour and although Skibine and the beautiful little Andrea Karlsen wring some sadness out of the story the total effect is slight. *Annabel Lee* was more interesting as an idea and more moving as a ballet. Skibine and Marjorie Tallchief, with three cloaked figures to represent Death, danced out the story while the Edgar Allen

Poe poem was sung from the orchestra pit. Byron Schiffman's music had the naive sadness of a folk-song and contributed very largely to the atmosphere of the ballet. My chief criticism was that the stage action was a little too straightforward for the strange and haunted story. Once again, decor could have helped, or more imaginative lighting; nevertheless, there was enough charm and feeling in the ballet for it to warrant further thought and attention and I hope someone can spare time (and money) to really develop the idea.

The new *pas de deux* by John Taras entitled *Tarasiana* was danced to the music we mostly think of as *Mozartiana*. The difference in name probably explains sufficiently the difference between choreography and music. The effect was achieved mainly by an exhibition of difficulties overcome by the two very accomplished dancers, Hightower and Golovine.

Mr. Taras also rearranged *Aurora's Wedding* and served up his new dish under the title *Divertissement*. The best of it was still Petipa, but I shall always remember the dignity with which George Zoritch wore a feathered hat that I would have expected to defeat anyone. Golovine was not quite so good in the *Blue Bird pas de deux* as might have been hoped, his *coda* was brilliant and much of the rest very beautifully danced, but he seemed seriously at a disadvantage in partnering Harriet Toby and the sum effect was not, therefore, satisfying. *Designs with Strings* remains the best ballet Taras has done, the only one that suggests genuine emotion; it varies a little in meaning with each company that performs it and I do not think anyone has since given it the adolescent heartbreak that the Metropolitan Ballet suggested. The present version might well be sub-titled *Within a Budding Grove*—but it is still charming.

I enjoyed the Balanchine *Pas de Trois* (from *Paquita*) enormously; it is an unashamed show piece for three fine dancers and the night I saw it Hightower, Toby and Golovine seemed to revel in it. The costumes by Pierre Balmain were gay and attractive and for a number of this length (but not a moment longer) Minkus is my favourite composer.

I wish I could have enjoyed Hightower's dancing in the classical ballets as much as in the *pas de deux*. She has always had a tendency towards virtuosity, which in its place is admirable, but has seemed to subdue it less and less in the interests of building

character or evoking mood. In the performance of dramatic roles she is at her best as the Street Dancer in *Beau Danube*, at her worst in *Swan Lake*. Skibine remains the sensitive portrayer of character, but this season even he occasionally overstepped the bounds so that his appealing, moonraking eyes became maudlin and a little absurd. I do not care for him in a strictly classical solo and indeed he does not fit into any neat category; nevertheless, at his best he is a fine and important artist. Marjorie Tallchief seems to me to have a brittle, modern quality that might be used to great advantage in a sophisticated new ballet, but is not much utilised in the present repertoire, while Harriet Toby is a correct, almost relentless, dancer who needs much softening and much more experience before she will rouse in me more

than academic admiration for feats accomplished.

Serge Golovine was the one really exciting dancer of the season and for one new dancer we are grateful—if only every season in London could yield so much! He has the easy carriage of an artist who knows his power, and a most beautiful control and speed of movement. He is a good shape and the right size for a real classical dancer of the old school and has most charming stage manners. As yet we have seen him do little but odd *pas de deux* and *The Enchanted Mill* in which no great characterisation was required of him. In *Beau Danube*, however, he restored the King of the Dandies to something like his rightful place and, given proper instruction and advice, he should develop into that rare being, a great male dancer who is also an interpretative artist.

THE PHOTOGRAPH ON THE RIGHT IS OF A GROUP OF STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL, RECENTLY OPENED IN NICE BY GERARD MULYS. THE ADDRESS OF THE STUDIO — WHICH ALREADY NUMBERS OVER FORTY PUPILS — IS 39 RUE GIOFFREDO, NICE (AT THE END OF THE GARDEN ON THE RIGHT). M. MULYS THIS SUMMER HAD VISITING STUDENTS FROM SWEDEN, HOLLAND AND ENGLAND, AND HE HOPES THAT ANY ENGLISH DANCERS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF NICE DURING 1952 WILL MAKE A NOTE OF HIS ADDRESS IN CASE THEY FEEL IMPULSED TO KEEP IN PRACTICE DURING THEIR VISIT.



MRINALINI SARABHAI AND HER INDIAN BALLET

By FERNAU HALL

It is a pleasure to welcome Mrinalini Sarabhai and her company back to London. Her work in the field of Indian choreography demands the most serious attention from the critic; since she is familiar with two of the main classical Indian styles, various Indian attempts at the creation of a modern style, and European theatrical dancing, one can be certain that whatever she does is based on wide and thorough knowledge. Her artistic integrity is undeniable: there are no concessions to that dangerous Will-o'-the-Wisp, "Western taste".

Apart from solo items, Mrinalini Sarabhai's current repertoire includes two new ballets (*Chitrangada* and *Matsya Kanya*) and one ballet shown at her last visit, *Manushya*. *Chitrangada*, adapted from a Tare dance-drama, is described in the programme as "Manipuri" and since Mrinalini Sarabhai spent three years at Shantiniketan one might have expected the choreography to be in the Shantiniketan style; fortunately, however, she has used her accustomed combination of Kathakali and Bharata Natyam.

Chitrangada has much the same assets and deficiencies as other Sarabhai ballets. There are admirable scenes which succeed completely, but their impact is dulled by surrounding passages which make little effect, and the ballet falls apart into separate scenes, with no inevitable movement towards a climax one finds in the traditional Kathakali dance-dramas. In *Chitrangada* these weaknesses are exaggerated by bad casting: the heroic and virile Chakranni Pannicker (who cannot help dancing like the hero Arjuna in every role) is cast as the God of Love, and the subtle, delicate Shivashankar is cast as Arjuna! Both Pannicker and Shivashankar have greatly improved since their last appearance in London. Pannicker has lost much of his roughness without sacrificing any of his ebullient personality, while Shivashankar—who before seemed no more than a polished technician—has gained considerable stage presence and shows interesting dramatic potentialities.

Mrinalini Sarabhai is seen to good advantage in the first scene of this ballet, where she appears as an Indian Diana, dressed like a man and hunting in the forest. Though for some reason she does not wear male attire, she characterises the role admirably, dancing with a stern, withdrawn look on her face and a fine precision in her movement. Unfortunately she then falls in love and reverts to her usual soft and smiling style which does not suit either her features or her personality.

The other new ballet, *Matsya Kanya*, is clearly intended as a Hindu *Lac des Cygnes*, with the evil spell causing a transformation in the direction of fishes under the water instead of swans on its surface. Scenes 2 and 3 are short but effective: in the former the fish-maidens perform a delightful little dance combining elements from Bharata Natyam and Kathakali to a lilting rhythm which belongs to neither, and in the latter the Prince (Pannicker) and the Fish Princess (Mrinalini Sarabhai) have a sort of dance-competition at the bottom of the river. Though the choreography of Scene 3 is partly unsatisfactory—Pannicker performs a series of high kicks which are unsuitable for imitation by a Kathakali danseuse, and look all wrong in Mrinalini Sarabhai's subdued version—this scene is redeemed by its admirable staging on a high rostrum behind a gauze curtain, in a dome of yellow light. In fact both the new ballets owe much to the decors of Jayantkumar Desai, who has a fine sense of colour and atmosphere.

It is characteristic of Mrinalini Sarabhai's somewhat erratic sense of balletic construction that at the first entrance of the fish-princesses she does nothing to establish their fishy nature: we only find this out after they have gone, when the men suddenly perform a Kathakali fish-mudra. Sometimes she establishes a dramatic effect with admirable precision (e.g. the luring of the prince away from his companions) but there are other times when she does not appear to see that dramatic effect is demanded by the theme.

The best scenes in *Manushya* (the Kathakali dance class, the game of hop-scotch, and the ball dance) are as delightful as ever; and the traditional Kathakali ball dance (devised by Mrinalini Sarabhai) has been expanded by converting the end of it into a *pas de deux*. The Dalcrozie figures in black cloaks who represented Anger, Fear and Greed, have been transformed into pale imitations of Kathakali demons: the change is in the right direction, but does not go far enough. The sudden death of Man in the middle of a dance, without warning and for no apparent reason, still spoils the end of this interesting ballet—an ambitious attempt to adapt the expressionist drama of the 'twenties to Indian philosophy and the Kathakali technique.

There are two exciting new solo items—a scene of *abhinaya* in which Pannicker gives a splendid demonstration of the Kathakali method of representing the elephant, the serpent and the lion (though he should take more care of his elephant-walk, which

is not stately enough), and a warrior dance of Malabar, performed by Shivashankar and Govindan. In theory the latter is a folk dance, but the two artists perform it with all the brio and bravura of Kathakali, and make it tremendously effective.

The weaknesses in the construction of the individual ballets and of the programme as a whole are probably due to the fact that Mrinalini Sarabhai combines the roles of principal dancer, producer, choreographer and artistic director: no one has yet succeeded in combining these roles successfully, for the good reason that their interests lead in different directions, and can even be contradictory. On the other hand it is clear that Mrinalini Sarabhai has started something with immense potentialities: if she can find a way of reconciling the contradictions in her artistic policy she can make her company into one of the most important in the world.

MRINALINI SARABHAI AND CHATUNNI PANNICKER AS THE FISH PRINCESS AND THE PRINCE IN MATSYA KANYA

Photograph by Paul Wilson



Ballet Rambert at Hammersmith

IN this short season, all the three works new to London were by David Paltenghi. Without doubt the most impressive was *Scherzi della Sorte*, which was first seen at Ballet Workshop and which has already, therefore, been reviewed in some detail. The ballet starts off with the advantages of Leslie Hurry's set and an excellent arrangement of early Italian music by Geoffrey Corbett. On a large stage it has lost some of that shut-in feeling which made it so effective at the Mercury, but it is still a forceful work. The story, no doubt, is our old friend the eternal triangle, but it is told with such power that it grips the imagination. The choreography is not only striking and expressive in itself, but suits the mood of the music.

I wish I could say the same for *Canterbury Prologue*, the music for which, by P. Racine Fricker was specially commissioned for Festival Year. After the first performance the ballet was prefaced by a charming and persuasive curtain speech by Madame Rambert herself, but not even she could make me believe that the ballet had any real connection with its Chaucerian origin. Since the ballet is made up of a series of almost unconnected episodes, it never builds up any drama, and what characterisation there is, is feeble. I find it impossible to judge what were the choreographer's intentions here: I would not be surprised to learn that he was defeated by the music which, though most interesting to listen to, is, I should think, all but undanceable. Its jerkiness and acidity, too, are distinctly un-Chaucerian, as is the set by Edward Burra, which reminds me forcibly of a dank coal cellar. Yet the *Canterbury Prologue* takes place in the open air, in all the glory of an English spring.

Fate's Revenge is a far simpler matter. It is a little joke which goes on a little too long, but at least serves to introduce Margaret Hill, as a fast and wealthy lady, in one of those comedy parts in which she really excels.

Sadly depleted as the company is, it remains to give honour to Madame Rambert for moulding these young, inexperienced dancers into a disciplined organisation which can give points to many larger and wealthier companies. Among the newer names there are at least two worth watching—Beryl Goldwyn (who sometimes looks startlingly like Markova and has something of her feeling for music) and Ann Horn.

FRANK JACKSON.

Igor Schwezoff

THE Federation of Russian Classical Ballet announce that Igor Schwezoff has recently been appointed their Honorary President and will be coming from New York to attend the annual examinations which will be held in London in May. During April and May M. Schwezoff will be guest teacher at the School of Russian Ballet in Chelsea and will choreograph one or two ballets. It is interesting that M. Schwezoff founded a school of his own in Chelsea, at Gunter Hall, shortly before the war.

Although of the younger school, M. Schwezoff trained at the Academic School of Ballet, Leningrad, and grew up in an era of great ballet. He escaped from Russia after the revolution by way of Manchuria and eventually made his way back to Europe. He has described these adventures in his autobiography *Borzoï* which was awarded a £1,000 prize when published in the late 'thirties. During the last ten years Schwezoff has been living in the Americas where he choreographed *Eternal Struggle* and *The Red Poppy* for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. More recently he has settled in New York and opened a Ballet Studio.

Sadler's Wells Ballet Goes Abroad

FRANKLIN WHITE

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FABER

Balletomane's Bookshelf

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET GOES ABROAD, by Franklin White. With photographs by Bryan Ashbridge. (Faber & Faber Ltd.; 25/-.)

"You've never lived until you've been on tour!" says the Manager in *The Bartered Bride* to the innocent Vasek, and many's the time I've remembered it—not always happily. Consequently I did not expect to enjoy the story of a tour covering thirty-one cities and twenty-one thousand miles in five months: but it seems that as the figures become more frightening so the fun becomes more fast and furious. (However, it is obvious that a life lived at this pace for a year or two would certainly be a short and a gay one.)

Every theatrical relies to some extent on his touring anecdotes for success on social occasions: but if Franklin White should ever be persuaded to relate his earlier adventures in this country the rest of us will be sadly outdazzled, for his portrayal of the strange unnatural life experienced on the American tour is so complete, so clear and yet so free from embellishment that he succeeds in making the facts

both fascinating and wholly credible.

He also writes of the members of the company with the freshness of apparent recent acquaintance—although he has been one of them since 1942: and his descriptive powers are remarkable. This reminds me that Franklin White is also a painter and originally intended to become a naturalist—both professions requiring keen observation, a quality which accounts for the third component of his story: the moments of revealing observation of odd things which struck him *en route* and which make the book an enjoyable story whether the reader cares for ballet or not.

Unfortunately, Faber & Faber have not laid out the photographs so beautifully as the type, and they are only interesting as records of the company off-stage: but that in itself is a change and will supplement the text for those reading the book without knowing the ballet world. Because this book combines interest, charm, facts and a good story everyone should have it on the bookshelf to return to at will.

LEO KERSLEY.

Angna Enters at the Mercury

Angna Enters, I see from my invaluable Dance Encyclopedia, is a versatile woman, "professionally self-educated in dance and mime . . ." as writes Mr. Chujoy, she has also given many exhibitions of her paintings in New York, exhibited her own sculptures and written and illustrated three books, as well as writing several original stories for motion pictures. When too, the talents of the theatrical performer are added the keen observation of the painter and the intuition of the writer, it is hardly surprising that Miss Enters displays such deadly accuracy in the dissection of human mannerisms. In fact such a sketch as *Narcissism* (a study of a lonely woman in New York) is more than merely accurate: it is painful to watch, and the more so because it holds its own brand of fascination which hypnotises one into observation much as one would prefer to look away.

It is difficult to single out any of Miss Enters' widely contrasted inspirations for particular praise, as there is little in any of them to get hold of: everything is understated. But it will be a long time before I forget her delicious Boy Cardinal, or her Odalisque, or the hopeless, is-it-worth-it expression of the woman of the 'nineties hooking up her red corset.

JANET SINCLAIR.



ANGNA ENTERS IN HER CUISINE FRANCAISE

Ballet Vocabulary (9)

Compiled by

LEO KERSLEY and JANET SINCLAIR.

JETÉ (Continued)

3. JETÉ PASSÉ or JETÉ EN ATTITUDE. The dancer stands with the right leg behind him, then springs, passing his legs in mid-air to land on the right foot with the left leg behind him. The dancer may beat his calves together in the air just before the legs pass. These jetés can also be done with the legs raised in front.

The four little cygnets conclude their dance with sixteen little jetés in attitude in groups of four, alternating to front and back. Earlier in the dance they perform a series of 32 alternating in the same manner.

PETIT JETÉ or EMBOITÉ. The dancer stands on the right foot with the left touching the right ankle in front. He springs up and brings the right foot in front, to land with it touching the left ankle. This can also be done DERRIERE, lifting the foot behind the other ankle. *Petits jetés* are usually performed while making a half turn during each jump.

Before the *DEMI-TOURS* which conclude *Aurora's* solo in the *Vision Scene*, *Aurora* performs a series of eight petits jetés en tournant.

GRAND JETÉ DESSUS EN TOURNANT. The dancer stands with the right leg extended behind him. Turning his back, he steps on to the right leg (now before him) and bends it, at the same time throwing his left leg past high into the air, and springs, raising his arms to help himself. While he is in the air the dancer turns to the front again passing his legs so that he lands in the position in which he began, with his arms extended at the side of his shoulders. The dancer may beat his legs as they pass in the air.

The male dancer in the pas de trois from "*Swan Lake*" opens his solo with a PAS DE BOURRETS OUVERTE backwards and a grand jeté dessus en tournant. This jeté recurs three times.

4. JETÉ EN AVANT or EN ARRIERE, or SISSONE OUVERTE. Begins from both feet. The dancer springs forward, landing with one leg raised behind him, or backward (*en arriere*) landing with one leg raised in front.

The male solo in the *Don Quixote* pas de deux (*Petipa*) begins with a series of successive jetés en avant changés battus — COUPÉS — ASSEMBLÉS forward.

PIEDS, CHANGEMENTS DE

The dancer springs up, straightening the knees in the air, and changes the feet before landing, the feet close together in the reverse position. These jumps resemble *sauts* and *soubresauts*. *Changements* become *ENTRECHATS* once a beating of the legs is added.

PIROUETTE or TOUR

A turn on one leg, in which the dancer spins round on one foot, with the other raised in any position. Sometimes a dancer will begin to turn in one position and continue in another. The dancer always *pirouettes* on the toe; when he lowers his heel and rises again at the completion of each spin in a series, he is performing a *RELEVÉ PIR-OUETTE*. The most comfortable way in which to prepare for a *pirouette* is by standing evenly on both feet.

Eglevsky, in Fokine's L'Epreuve d'Amour, performed many slow pirouettes beginning from a low position with his knees well bent and the feet together and then slowly rose in a spiral during the turns.

The second Blue Girl in Les Patineurs commences her solo with two single piqués pirouettes en dedans followed by a piqué pirouette en attitude en dedans. This sequence is repeated trav-

elling round the stage (en manège).

The third solo in the pas de trois from Swan Lake concludes with a series of piqués pirouettes en dehors.

SAUTÉS PIROUETTES. *Sautés pirouettes* is a rather misleading term, as the dancer does not jump, but spins round with one leg raised: pivoting on the ball of the foot he quickly shifts the heel round in tiny sharp movements, causing the leg and body to revolve.

As the curtain falls on Les Patineurs the male dancer is performing sautés pirouettes alone on the stage.

Immediately after Giselle's entrance in Act II, she bows to Myrtha and then rises straight into a series of sautés pirouettes.

GRAND PIROUETTE. An exercise based on *sautés* and *relevé pirouettes a la seconde*, of which there are many variations.

Harlequin concludes his "Paganini" variation in Carnaval with a grand pirouette consisting of sautés and relevés pirouettes à la seconde followed by a pirouette with the right foot on the left knee before sitting down in the centre of the stage.

SUPPORTED PIROUETTES are a part of double work where the male dancer steadies his partner as she turns.

Ballet Club Activities

The Willesden Ballet Circle has organised a demonstration of Siamese dancing by a group of students under the direction of Miss Saisvasdi Svasti at Anson Hall, Chichele Road, Cricklewood, on Friday, December 21st, at 8 p.m. Visitors will be welcome. Admission 2s., under 16 1s.

It is hoped to form a ballet circle at the Rosehill Community Centre, Sutton. Ballet lovers in the Carshalton, Merton and Morden districts are invited to get in touch with the Warden, Mr. P. F. Machin, Rose Hill House, Sutton, Surrey.

The Leeds Ballet Circle (Secretary, Mr. M. Sykes, 7 Westfield Road, Morley, Nr. Leeds) has just organised a varied film show including excerpts from Soviet, English and Australian ballets. This group lays special emphasis on "the combined arts of ballet" and tries not to confine its interests solely to dancing.

We regret to announce the death of Catherine Littlefield, one of the pioneers of American ballet. An obituary will appear in our January number.

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